

MINNETONKA FIRE DEPARTMENT 2021 | ANNUAL REPORT

Be Safe.
Be Effective.
Be Nice.



OUR MISSION

To continuously protect and preserve life and property through quality education, prevention, disaster preparedness and rapid emergency response.

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LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

We are pleased to present you with the Minnetonka Fire Department 2021 Annual Report. After lockdowns and dealing with the pandemic in 2020, in 2021 the fire department experienced a record level of emergency responses in our community. Your fire department responds to more than fires and, as you can see in this report, we have been busy with a variety of emergencies.

Our new Central Fire Station opened in 2021 to better serve the community from the city hall campus after 18 months of construction. We welcome you to arrange a tour or visit our open house and see the fire station for yourself on October 11, 2022.

The Minnetonka Fire Department's greatest asset is our people. Our staff has remained committed to providing quick and effective services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic without missing a beat.

If you have any question about this report or the fire department in general, do not hesitate to contact me at 952-939-8333 or jvance@minnetonkamn.gov.

Chief John Vance



Service Before Self



OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES

- Educate & serve to reduce risks & hazards & help people improve their quality of life with our services.
- Remain ever "battle ready" — prepared for all manner of emergency response.
- Respond with excellence at the strategic, tactical and task levels
- Operate safely and effectively to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Treat each other and our customers with respect and courtesy.

MINNETONKA FIRE DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

Minnetonka Fire is a paid-on-call fire department with 12 full-time staff and administrative personnel. Paid-on-call firefighters operate as our part-time station officers and firefighters, responding for training and paged calls to the five fire stations located around the City of Minnetonka. Firefighters also staff our Central Fire Station 24 hours a day, seven days per week to respond to our daily 911 calls as well as maintain our readiness. All of our firefighters are licensed by the state and have certifications in firefighting, hazardous materials handling and as emergency medical professionals. Our part-time staffing fluctuates throughout the year due to retirements, resignations, and hiring. We ended 2021 with 81 part-time firefighters.

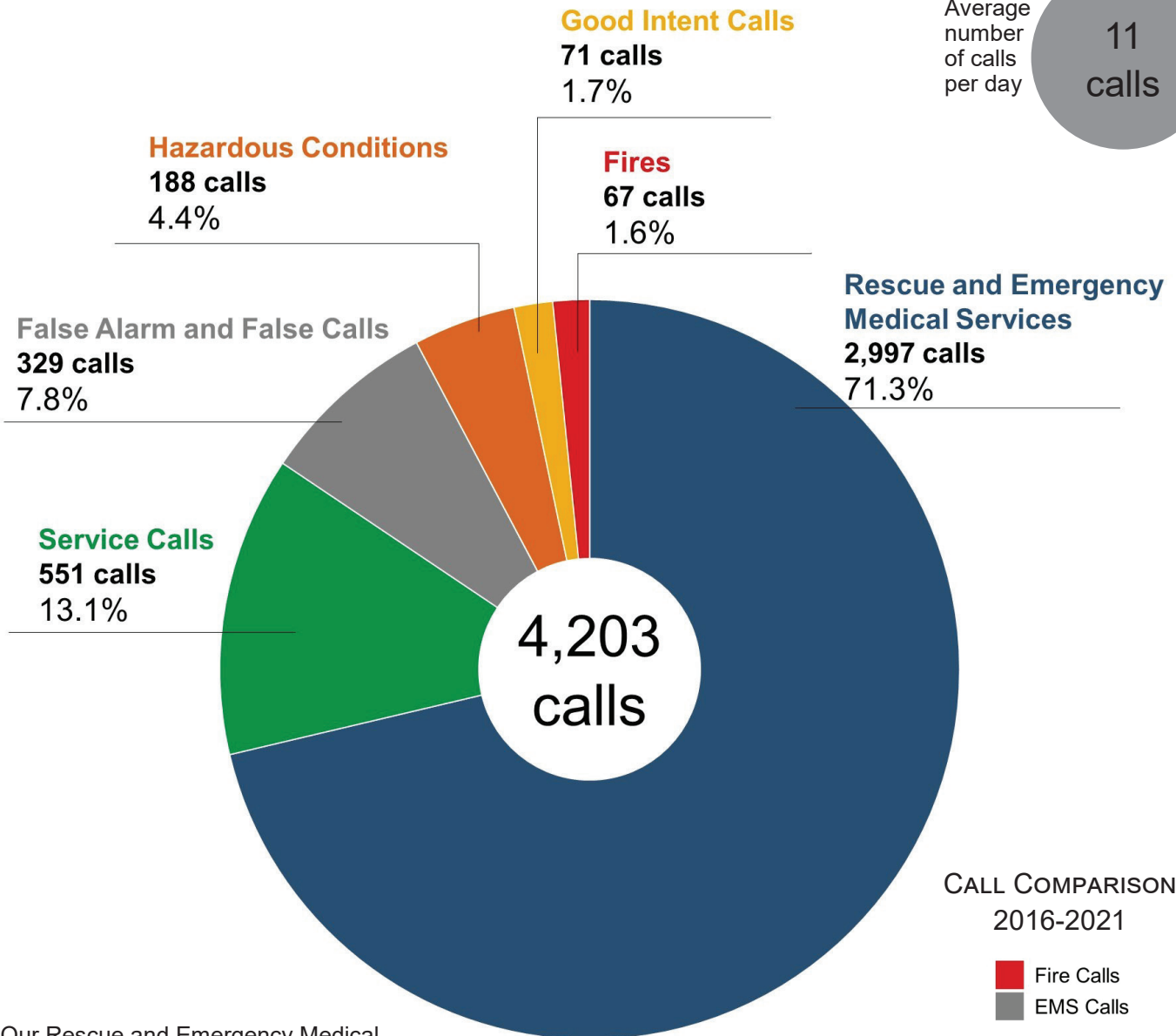
FIREFIGHTER MINIMUM PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Five duty-crew shifts per month, 75% attendance at trainings per quarter and 25% of paged calls for the year.

2021 CALL STATISTICS

Average
number
of calls
per day

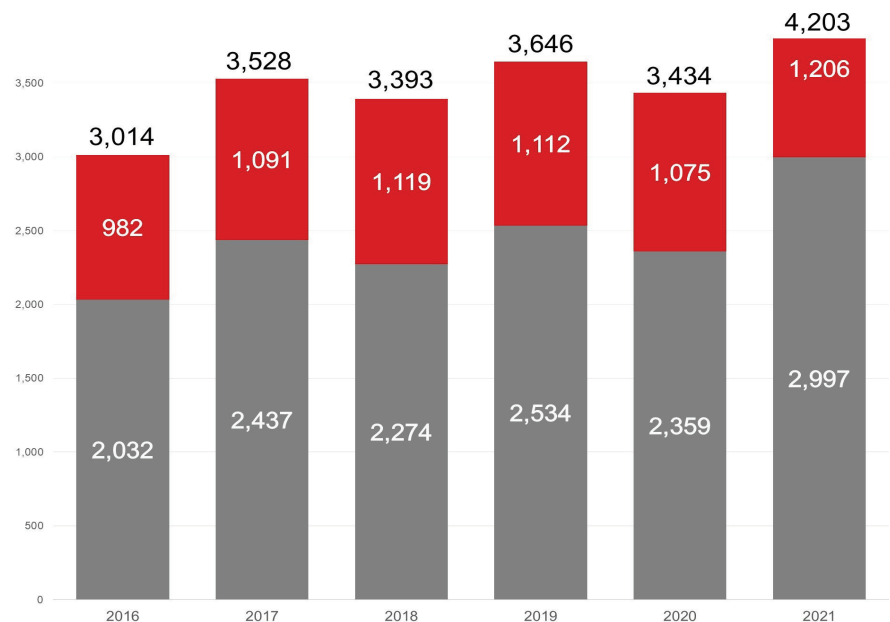
11
calls



CALL COMPARISON
2016-2021

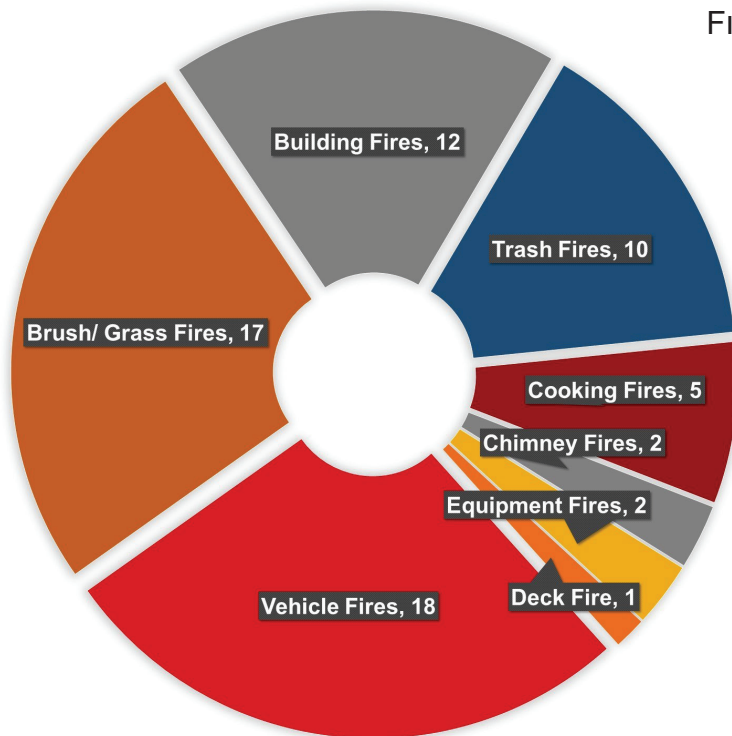
Fire Calls
EMS Calls

Our Rescue and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls range from diabetic emergencies, heart attacks, broken bones, strokes and drug overdoses to motor vehicle accidents to ice and water rescues. Hazardous conditions usually involve a natural gas leak, oil spill, carbon monoxide reading or downed power line. The majority of our service calls are lift assists—firefighters are called to help a resident who has fallen, but is not injured. Good intent calls are those called in by a passerby or worried resident who has smelled smoke or another odor. Firefighters arrive to investigate and either are unable to find a source or find a non-emergency situation like a recreational fire, barbeque or steam. False alarm calls are most often caused by automated alarm system malfunctions.



FIRE STATISTICS

In addition to the fires within the City of Minnetonka, much of our department fire response is to aid in extinguishment, scene management and incident command with our local community partner departments. We had 53 of those calls in 2021. For fires in Minnetonka, we received aid 17 times. We partner with our neighboring departments to train on fire ground tactics and incident command to ensure smooth running calls no matter the city.



1:27

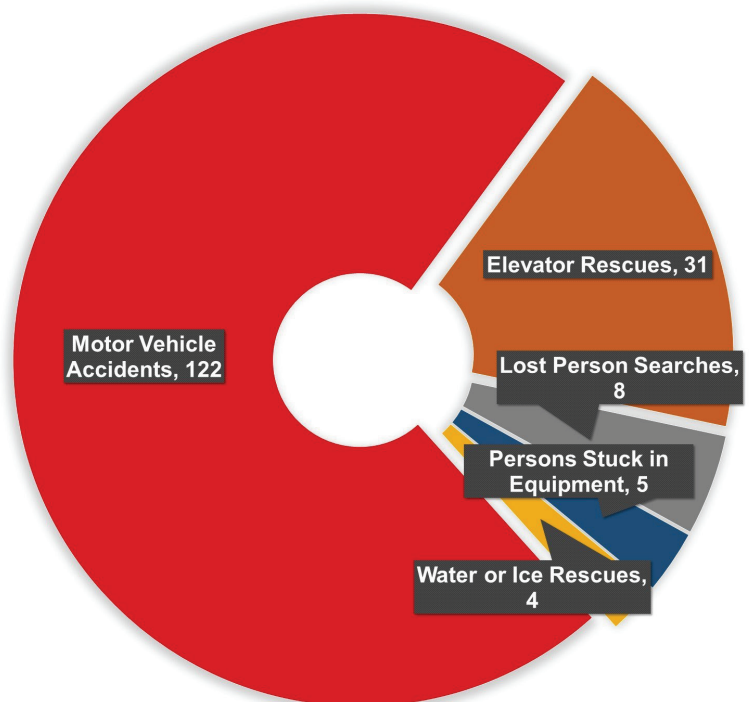
Average time from dispatch to door.

Average time on calls.

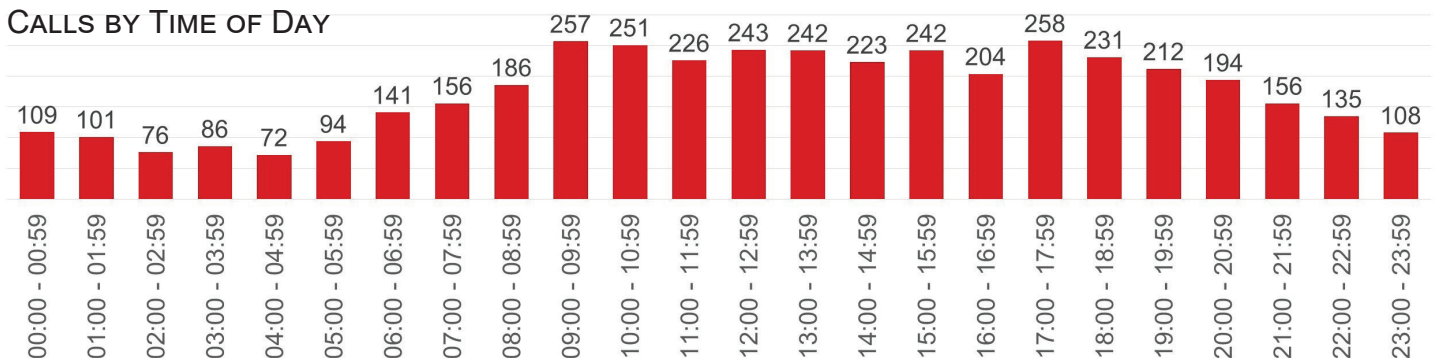
19:31

Three buildings had successful fire sprinkler saves—this indicates that a building equipped with a fire sprinkler system activated and contained a fire prior to fire department arrival, reducing further risk to the property and people involved. Two were in larger apartment/condominium buildings with no residents displaced and one was in a strip mall, shutting down one business for a few days, but not affecting the remaining businesses.

We have a call-back model where larger incidents or urgent needs for additional staffing can be covered by paging out part-time members. In 2021, 4,107 or 98% of our calls were handled by the duty crew only. 34% (1,426) of those calls were overlapping, with multiple calls ongoing and needing multiple crews. When we do call out for additional staffing, on average we have 34 of 81 members respond, not including full-time staff who attend as part of an engine crew or command staff.



CALLS BY TIME OF DAY



OPERATIONS DIVISION

Deputy Chief Kevin Fox is a nearly 30-year veteran of the department, having served as a paid-on-call firefighter, Fire Marshal and now as second in command of the fire department, heading up our Operations Division. In addition to overseeing our daily operations, Deputy Chief Fox is also responsible for our equipment and fire apparatus.

We strive to maintain the condition and integrity of our trucks:

Daily and
Weekly
Checks

Regular
Maintenance

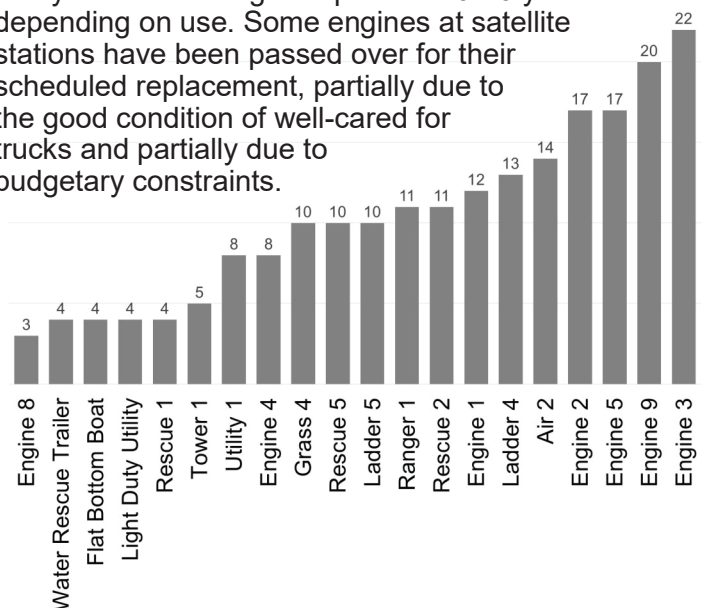
Department of
Transportation
Inspections

Yearly
Testing

Scheduled
Refurbishments

Engine companies can transport four to five firefighters. These trucks carry hoses, ladders and other equipment needed to extinguish a fire. Water tanks hold 500 gallons of water for quick attacks on arrival at fires, though most water is pumped from the city's 3,000+ hydrants. Engines also carry medical equipment and supplies to handle medical emergencies.

12 of our apparatus are 10 years old or older, with many of them having life spans of 10-20 years depending on use. Some engines at satellite stations have been passed over for their scheduled replacement, partially due to the good condition of well-cared for trucks and partially due to budgetary constraints.



TRAINING DIVISION

In addition to working on firefighter recruitment, hiring and retention, the training division focuses on maintaining our members' skills in every area: fires, apparatus operation, emergency medical services, hazardous materials containment and clean up, equipment use, radio training, water and ice rescues, vehicle extrications, fire alarms and suppression systems, mayday scenarios and general firefighting and leadership enhancement. On average, each of our personnel trained for 124 hours this year!

As of December 2021, our Training Captain was promoted to Battalion Chief of Training to ensure a better chain of command from the training division to our station captains.



13,655

hours of training for
110 personnel

2,255

hours of emergency
medical training

1,326

hours of training in
Fire 1 and Fire 2

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Assistant Chief Jim Flanders is a nearly 35-year veteran of the department who was awarded the 2021 Spirit of Minnetonka award.

"In 2021, Flanders' role overseeing emergency management for the city took on a whole new meaning. Flanders' contributions have enhanced Minnetonka's public safety for more than 20 years, and his preparedness and expertise were invaluable as the city navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. His ability to calmly and effectively lead and provide training during in crisis situations was on the forefront of the city's pandemic response. His efforts ensured the city could continue to effectively serve the community despite immeasurable challenges and uncertainty. Congratulations to Jim on this well-deserved recognition, and thank you for all you do to keep our community prepared and safe!"



This division manages our emergency medical equipment, certifications, required trainings and medical direction. As EMT first responders, our main job on medical emergencies is to assist Paramedics with assessing the patient or tending to patient needs before Paramedics arrive. Firefighters are also often requested to ride with paramedics in the ambulance to help with patient care on the way to the hospital. 62 times firefighters rode in with Paramedics in 2021. One firefighter held a minutes-old baby while paramedics attended to the medical needs of the mother.

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY DIVISION

Assistant Chief Luke Berscheit is also our Fire Marshal and the head of our Fire & Life Safety Division. As an almost 20-year veteran on the department, he has not only served as a paid-on-call firefighter, but also served alongside his dad!

165
Fire protection
permits reviewed
and approved

293
Permitted
inspections

190
Fire call
follow-ups

166
Existing building
inspections

13
New buildings,
including our
own!

This division also has a full-time Fire Inspector and a Fire and Life Safety Specialist. In 2021 we reorganized from two part-time public educators to one full-time specialist. Not only will this specialist continue our education programs like Hands-Only CPR, Fire and Life Safety Presentations, smoke detector installations, school presentations and working with other community events, this position will also be a certified fire inspector to assist with existing building inspections and fire inspections. Despite many events still being cancelled, our specialist was able to resume delivering life safety education programs—many schools held these special visitor classes outside to lower the risk of disease transmission.

Fire Inspector Shawn Johnson continues to serve as the Team Supervisor with the Hennepin County Fire Investigation Team. He assisted with 17 of 43 fire investigations in 2021. Shawn has been part of the team since 2011 and previously served as a fire investigator and team leader. Fire and Life Safety Specialist Sara Ahlquist serves as the Public Education Chairperson on the Board of the Fire Marshal's Association of Minnesota (FMAM). Sara has been involved with FMAM since 2018.

173
Public
Education
events and
tours

120
Quality of
Life Follow
-Ups

8,378
Total 2021
Attendees



With masking and sanitation procedures in place, we were able to host our popular Open House event for the first time since 2018! We were lucky enough to have a beautiful fall day for plenty of outdoor activities, including ending the evening with fireworks. Estimates of attendees are around 3,000 people!

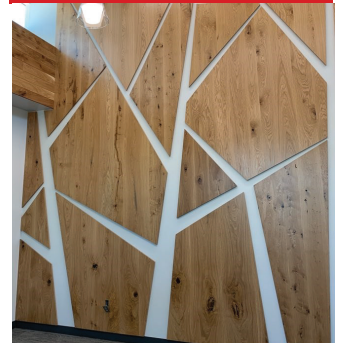
NEW CENTRAL FIRE STATION

After 18 months of construction, our administrative staff moved into our new building in the summer of 2021 and Duty Crew and Station One began operation here during December 2021.

Our new central fire station and administrative headquarters was designed with features to ensure this building can serve the city and our fire department today and into the future:

- More equitable sleeping, bathroom, shower and locker spaces—all gender-neutral.
- Improved office space for meetings and completing reports while on Duty Crew.
- A cutting-edge technology training room equipped for classroom training, web training and flexible meeting spaces.
- Adaptable training spaces in our apparatus area so firefighters can train on-site.
- Office and cubicle spaces for our current staff, officers and future full-time members.
- Full-size locker room for all fire ground personal protective equipment (PPE), to reduce the risk of cancer-causing agents in firefighter's personal vehicles.
- Gear-washing and drying facilities on-site to clean firefighter PPE after each incident.
- Handicapped accessible public areas, including ramps and automatic doors.
- Emergency medical station in our front lobby for walk-in emergencies.
- Designated contamination and decontamination zones to reduce presence of cancer-causing agents in living areas:
 - Firefighting equipment and gear can remain in the garage area to be cleaned and washed (the hot zone).
 - A decontamination area between the garages and living quarters where firefighters have access to scrubs, towels, toiletries & showers (warm zone).
 - All living areas remain PPE and contaminated equipment free for the safety of firefighters (cold zone).
- A fitness room to encourage cardiac and physical health and wellness habits.
- Additional technology in all spaces for 911 call dispatching and call tracking.
- Updated kitchen and gathering spaces.
- Low-energy LED lighting with motion detection and dimming capabilities for energy savings.
- High-efficiency heating and air conditioning.

Many of the wood accents around the station is wood that was processed from the trees that were taken down for the project.



"This facility will not only serve the residents and visitors of our city well, it is a testament to how this city feels about their responders. The health and safety features, coupled with the welcoming environment for visitors and those who will work here will allow us to function professionally, effectively and safely for decades to come".
— Chief John Vance

We also have a multi-use Emergency Operations Center (EOC). We would use the EOC for operations during a disaster or other major incident in the City of Minnetonka.



